

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A bumper guard for attachment to a sports racquet, the sports racquet
2 including a frame having a head portion with an outer peripheral surface and a plurality
3 of grommet holes formed into the head portion for supporting a string bed, the bumper
4 guard comprising:

5 an elongate body having a first length, an inner surface and an outer
6 surface, the body including a central region, which when installed on the racquet is
7 generally centered about a plane defined by the string bed, and first and second wings
8 extending from the central region, the inner surface of the body configured to generally
9 conform with the peripheral outer surface of the head portion, each of the first and
10 second wings having an inner wall and an outer wall defining at least one elongate
11 hollow cavity, the inner wall of each of the first and second wings extending from the
12 central region and being configured to contact the outer peripheral surface of the
13 racquet.

1 2. The bumper guard of claim 1, wherein the elongate body includes a
2 second elongate recess extending along the central region of the body, and wherein the
3 second recess is configured to correspond with a first elongate recess formed into the
4 outer peripheral surface of the racquet.

1 3. The bumper guard of claim 1, further comprising at least two spaced
2 apart generally cylindrical grommet members attached to and extending generally
3 perpendicular from the inner surface, and at the central region, of the body, and
4 wherein the grommet members are configured to extend into the grommet holes of the
5 head portion.

1 4. The bumper guard of claim 1, wherein the bumper guard includes a
2 central guard portion and first and second end guard portions.

1 5. The bumper guard of claim 4, wherein the first and second guard
2 portions are positioned at opposite ends of the central guard portion.

1 6. The bumper guard of claim 5, wherein only the first and second end
2 guard portions of the bumper guard include the first and second wings having inner and
3 outer walls which define the elongate hollow cavity.

1 7. The bumper guard of claim 1, wherein at least one of the elongate
2 cavities is filled with a material selected from the group consisting of a fluid, a gas, an
3 elastomeric material, and combinations thereof.

1 8. The bumper guard of claim 1, wherein each of the first and second wings
2 defines at least two spaced apart elongate hollow cavities.

1 9. The bumper guard of claim 1, wherein the body is formed of an inner
2 layer and an outer layer, and wherein the outer layer is configured to be free from
3 contact with the head portion.

1 10. The bumper guard of claim 1, wherein the cavity has a second length
2 that is less than the first length of the body.

1 11. The bumper guard of claim 1, wherein the body is formed of a material
2 selected from the group consisting of nylon, a generally rigid polymer, a polyamide and
3 combinations thereof.

1 12. The bumper guard of claim 11, wherein the material of the body has a
2 durometer of greater than 95 on the Shore A hardness scale.

1 13. A sports racquet including:
2 a frame having a head portion with an outer peripheral surface and a
3 plurality of grommet holes formed into the head portion;

4 a string bed supported by the head portion; and
5 a bumper guard removably engaged with the frame, the bumper guard
6 including,

7 an elongate body having a first length, an inner surface and an
8 outer surface, the body including a central region generally centered about a plane
9 defined by the string bed, and first and second wings extending from the central region,
10 the inner surface of the body generally conforming with the peripheral outer surface of
11 the head portion, each of the first and second wings having an inner wall and an outer
12 wall defining at least one elongate hollow cavity, the inner wall of each of the first and
13 second wings extending from the central region and contacting the outer peripheral
14 surface of the racquet.

1 14. The racquet of claim 1, wherein the racquet includes a first elongate
2 recess formed into the outer peripheral surface elongate body, and wherein the bumper
3 guard includes a second elongate recess extending along the central region of the
4 bumper guard, and wherein the first recess is configured to correspond with the second
5 recess.

1 15. The racquet of claim 1, further comprising at least two spaced apart
2 generally cylindrical grommet members attached to and extending generally
3 perpendicular from the inner surface, and at the central region, of the body, and
4 wherein the grommet members are configured to extend into the grommet holes of the
5 head portion.

1 16. The racquet of claim 1, wherein the bumper guard includes a central
2 guard portion and first and second end guard portions.

1 17. The racquet of claim 4, wherein the first and second guard portions are
2 positioned at opposite ends of the central guard portion.

1 18. The racquet of claim 5, wherein only the first and second end guard
2 portions of the bumper guard include the first and second wings having inner and outer
3 walls which define the elongate hollow cavity.

1 19. The racquet of claim 1, wherein at least one of the elongate cavities is
2 filled with a material selected from the group consisting of a fluid, a gas, an elastomeric
3 material, and combinations thereof.

1 20. The racquet of claim 1, wherein each of the first and second wings
2 defines at least two spaced apart elongate hollow cavities.

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